



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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FORMER AUSTIN BANK OFFICER ENTERS GUILTY PLEA IN NASCAR SCAM

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that 36-year-old Gary D. Jones of Austin pled guilty to federal charges in connection with a scheme to defraud Wells Fargo Bank and later Capitol Credit Union of more than \$1.3 million in cash and assets for personal use including funding a NASCAR Busch series racing venture.

Appearing before United States District Judge Sam Sparks yesterday afternoon, Jones pled guilty to one count each of conspiracy to defraud; theft, embezzlement, misapplication by a bank employee; fraud related to the acquisition of a loan and loan proceeds; bank fraud; and, making a false statement to an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Jones was a business banker with Wells Fargo and represented the interests of Wells Fargo in the extension of loans and credit to bank customers. From November of 2000 to March of 2003, Jones authorized a series of fraudulent loans that totaled over \$1.3 million. The loans were fraudulent in that Jones used fake documents to disguise the fact that Jones was the true borrower. Jones used the illegally acquired for his own personal spending spree. The majority of the loan proceeds were used by Jones, and his co-defendant, Angela Fatemeh Harkness, to fund an automobile racing venture on the NASCAR Busch series. Jones and Harkness conducted their auto racing business under the names A.G. Racing, L.L.C. and Angela's Motorsports, L.P.

"Gary Jones betrayed the trust of his employers by stealing over a million dollars to pay for his NASCAR misadventure. How Mr. Jones thought that he would get away with this bogus scheme is anyone's guess. The good news is that he will be held to account for his crime," stated United States Attorney Johnny Sutton.

As a result of his guilty plea, Jones faces up to 100 years in Federal prison but his actual sentence will be determined after the application of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines. Sentencing is scheduled for July 30, 2004, before Judge Sparks. Jones is being held in federal custody.

Angela Fatemeh Harkness pled guilty to conspiracy charges related to the fraud scheme. Harkness pled guilty on January 27, 2004, and was awaiting sentencing. However, she has become a fugitive and a federal warrant has been issued for her arrest.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Mark Lane is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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